

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #0102 0210549
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 210549Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2980
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 8032
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5289
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9184
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5182
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS SEOUL 000102

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/PD FOR SWALKER, EAP/P, EAP/K
STATE PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR FAX/ITP SCHEIKH
STATE PASS USTR FOR RCASSIDY
USDOC FOR 4430/IEP/OPB/EAP/JDONIUS
TREASURY FOR OASIA/MGREWE
CINCPAC FOR J-74

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KS](#) [US](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IN SEOUL

Subject: Media Reaction; Seoul

Presidential Inauguration/New Administration's Foreign Policy

"A New Beginning for America"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized (01/21): "President Obama's top priority, economic recovery, can gain momentum when it is pursued within the framework of international cooperation. Recently, important figures in the Obama Administration, including Secretary of State-designate Hillary Clinton, raised the need to renegotiate the KORUS FTA on the pretext of protecting the U.S. auto industry, sparking concerns that the new U.S. administration might be headed for 'protectionism.' As seen in the Great Depression in 1934, competitive protectionism among countries only aggravates an economic crisis. The U.S. should show leadership in creating a more open global trade system. The same goes for the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea has already made various gestures to bring itself to the world's attention in time for the inauguration of the new U.S. president. Seoul and Washington must waste no time in beginning talks over the nuclear issue and a new vision for the ROK-U.S. alliance."

"Good Luck, President Obama"

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo editorialized (01/21): "For Koreans, the North Korea nuclear issue and the pending KORUS FTA are of the utmost interest. The U.S. should try to balance resolving the North's nuclear issue through close cooperation with the ROK while at the same time adopting a tough diplomatic stance. The Obama Administration needs to decide whether delaying ratification of the bilateral trade deal and pursuing protectionism will serve U.S. national interests and the spirit of the ROK-U.S. alliance."

"High Expectations for Obama's Era"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo editorialized (01/21): "The reason why countries around the world welcome Obama's inauguration is that they sincerely hope that he will overcome the economic crisis and lead the world toward peace and stability by realizing his slogan of 'bold hope' and 'change.'"

"A New America, A New World"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (01/21): "As noted by Secretary of State-designate Hillary Clinton, the North Korean nuclear issue is an "urgent" one. Officials from the Obama camp are said to share a favorable view of resolving pending North Korean issues comprehensively, which range from dismantling North Korea's nuclear programs, normalizing U.S.-North Korean relations and (providing) economic and energy aid to the North, to establishing a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. That being the case, the shortcut to progress would be to exchange mutually trustworthy special envoys to confirm each side's intentions and then immediately to enter into negotiations with the North. If there is prompt progress on the nuclear issue, it would be easy for Obama to concentrate on other international issues, including the Middle East conflict. The start of the Obama Administration carries significant meaning in that it has opened a new era of progressivism in modern world politics."

Stephens